

Your Extension Newsline

FEBRUARY - Pruning Time Is Here!

Now is the best time to prune your non-flowering and summer flowering trees and shrubs because they are dormant. Determine what type of pruning is needed: train young plants, maintain tree and shrub health, reduce size or develop a special form. Pruning methods are divided into three categories:

Heading back: cutting off the end of a branch thus reducing size and encouraging it to grow dense.

Thinning out: remove branches by cutting back to where they join the parent stem which encourages better light penetration and air circulation.

Renewal pruning: removal of oldest branches at ground level or 18" above the ground encourages young vigorous branches to develop.

Remember pruning dead, diseased, damaged or dangerous plant parts should be done throughout the year.

Take a look at your pruning tools before you start your Spring pruning. Pruning should only be done with tools that are sharp and clean. After that inspection, gather your tools and head out into your landscape.

There are several rules to follow. They are:

- ◆ Use only bypass pruners because they make a sharp cut and do not wound the plant. Anvil pruners are not recommended.
- ◆ Prune lateral branches 1/4' above the bud at a 45 degree angle.
- ◆ Do not cut off the branch collar on trees.
- ◆ Do not prune spring flowering plants: azaleas, forsythia, camellias, in late winter/early spring because they bloom on last year's growth. They should be pruned IMMEDIATELY after they have flowered.

Pruning Clinics will be held on Saturdays, February 18 and 25th at various locations within York County. Call the York County Extension Office at 890-4040 or register online at www.yorkcounty.gov/vce "Upcoming Events".

HearSay Radio Show

Listen to timely gardening topics, horticultural questions and answers on WHRV 89.5 FM with Jim Orband, Kathy Lewis and Kathy Van Mullekom. Listen March 15, April 19, May 17, and June 21, from 12:00 noon until 1:00 p.m. You are invited to call in with your questions, 1-800-940-2240 or 440-2665.

Important Dates

Feb 20	10am, Home Tree & Small Fruit Pruning Clinic, Gammon Orchard, New Kent (call 566-1367 to register)
Feb 24	Comercial Pesticide Recertification, Northampton Community Center (call 727-1401 to register)
Feb 25	10am, Pruning Clinic, Running Man Subdivision, Club House
Mar 11	8:15am, Horticultural Extravaganza, Tabb High School
Mar 15	12 noon, HearSay Garden Radio Show WHRV 89.5 FM
Mar 18	9:30am, Home Gardener Program - Spring Session, York County Library-York Branch
Mar 25	9:30am, Home Gardener Program - Spring Session, York County Library-York Branch
Apr 1	9:30am, Home Gardener Program - Spring Session, York County Library-York Branch
Apr 6	10am, Plant Health Clinic, location to be announced (www.yorkcounty.gov/vce , "Upcoming Events")
Apr 8	9:30am, Home Gardener Program - Spring Session, York County Library-York Branch
Apr 12	6:30pm, Plant Health Clinic, location to be announced (www.yorkcounty.gov/vce , "Upcoming Events")
Apr 19	12 noon, HearSay Garden Radio Show WHRV 89.5 FM
Apr 22	CNU Gardening Symposium (www.lifelonglearning.cnu.edu)
May 6	9:00am, Plant Sale—Sponsored by the York County Master Gardener, Learning Garden & Arboretum
May 7	1pm, Bird FanFair, Tabb High School
May 9	6:30pm, Plant Health Clinic, location to be announced (www.yorkcounty.gov/vce , "Upcoming Events")
May 17	12 noon, HearSay Garden Radio Show WHRV 89.5 FM
May 18	10am, Plant Health Clinic, location to be announced (www.yorkcounty.gov/vce , "Upcoming Events")
May 24	6:30pm, Plant Health Clinic, location to be announced (www.yorkcounty.gov/vce , "Upcoming Events")
May 25	6:30pm, 4-H Chrysanthemum Project startup meeting
Jun 7	6:30pm, 4-H Chrysanthemum Project meeting—Plant Propagation
Jun 21	12 noon, HearSay Garden Radio Show WHRV 89.5 FM
Jun 26-30	York County 4-H Residential Summer Camp, Jamestown 4-H Center

HORTICULTURAL EXTRAVAGANZA

You are invited to a day long event that includes classes on plants, landscaping, and gardening, and other related horticultural topics.

The event is schedule on March 11 from 8:15 to 3:00 at Tabb High School. Attendees pre-select five classes from a choice of 27 horticultural topics. Courses are taught by area’s professionals. Cost of this program is \$12.00 and includes a catered box lunch. For reservations call early - 890-4940.

Home Gardener Program

The program is designed for people wanting to learn about gardening without becoming Master Gardeners and having to commit to volunteering 50 hours. However, the coursework is similar to the Master Gardener Training Program but much less in-depth and the instructors will be experienced Master Gardeners.

The first segment of this program will be offered four Saturday mornings classes starting on March 18 through April 8, 2006 from 9:30am to 12:30pm at the Yorktown Library - York County Branch. The second segment is taught in the Fall. Topics will cover: vegetable gardening, perennials, annuals, groundcovers, fertilizing and water quality/use, etc. Attendees will receive course material. Call York County Extension Office at 890-4944 for applications.

Plant Health Clinics

Plant Health Clinics involve York County citizens in their own landscapes and learn how to use correct horticultural practices that will reduce their use of pesticides and thereby help improve water quality. Diagnosis and recommendations of landscaping problems occurs while walking around homeowner’s yard with the Extension Agent, Master Gardeners, and homeowner’s neighbors and friends. A question and answer session closes each clinic.

Clinics will be held at 10-12 noon on April 6 and May 18. Other clinics will be held in the evening at 6:30 - 8:00 pm on April 12 and May 9, and 24. Call the York County Extension Office at 890-4940 to preregister.

4-H Chrysanthemum Project

The 4-H Chrysanthemum Project combines the skills of growing plants with the knowledge of how to account for, market and sell a “product.” Youth will receive and grow 20 chrysanthemums. Youth ages 10 to 15 may participate. First meeting date May 25 at 6:30 pm. Call the York County Extension Office at 890-4940 to register.

Recommendations (February, March, April)

Lawn Care—Cool Season Grasses (Fescue); Do nothing. If you fertilized properly in the fall, your lawn should be relatively green. Cut as necessary. Service your lawnmower and sharpen the blade. Consult the Cool Season Lawn Calendar at www.yorkcounty.gov “Local Horticulture Publications”, or call to get a copy by mail.

Warm Season Grasses (Bermuda, Centipede, Zoysia, and St. Augustine): Do nothing. Your lawn should be brown, unless you overseeded with an annual Rye grass. Service your lawnmower and sharpen the blade.

To control crabgrass apply “pre-emergent” herbicide. These pre-emergents prevent the weed seed from germinating. These products will not control already existing crabgrass. Crab grass starts germinating and growing when the soil temperature reaches 60 degrees. Applying crabgrass controls too early or too late is a waste of money and damages the environment. Always read the product labels carefully. Therefore, time your herbicide application when Forsythias bloom in early spring (Mar 5-10). The herbicide has a 4—6 week effective life. It is important to understand that you will not always have 100% control of your weeds. Many times you will have to supplement your controls with post-emergent weed controls.

Vegetables—The average last frost date is April 10. This means that warm season vegetables are planted outdoors after May 10. If starting seedlings, grow those plants 6—8 weeks earlier indoors. You can set out cool season vegetables 4 weeks before the average last frost date (approximately March 10). Make sure your growing conditions are insect free. We have had problems with vector (Thrips & Aphids) transmitting diseases (tomato spotted wilt virus) in previous summers. A lot of that can be eliminated by preventing insects from being a problem early in the season.

Ornamentals—Monitor needed evergreens (Arborvitae, Leyland Cypress, Junipers) for Bagworms. If you have had these insects in the past, use Dipel or Thuricide (containing Bacillus Thuriengensis) around May 15 sprayed thoroughly on the needles to kill the young larvae stage. Repeat as label directs.

Azaleas are plagued by Azalea Lace Bug (especially if located in a stressful area—full sun). Approximately May 15, spray the under side of the leaves with a desired insecticide (pesticides: orthene, sevin, cygon) to reduce the population and reapply 6 weeks after.


Other FREE Newsletters Available from the York County Extension Office

- ➡ **Advisor**—the newsletter for the Professional Horticulturists and employees in the Green Industry.
- ➡ **Clover Chronicle**—the newsletter of the York County 4-H Program.

To request change of service, address corrections, subscription removal, or subscriptions to other FREE Extension Newsletters please call 890-4940, or e-mail your request to ex199@vt.edu. Please include your name, mailing address, or e-mail address if you would like to be notified when Extension newsletters are available for viewing on our web site www.yorkcounty.gov/vce.

If you are a person with a disability and desire any assistive devices, services or other accommodations to participate in any Extension programs, please contact Jody Painter, York County Extension Office at 890-4940 during business hours of 8:15 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. to discuss accommodations 10 days prior to the event.

Your Extension Newslines is prepared and distributed free-of charge by the York County staff of Virginia Cooperative Extension.


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with Evelyn Parker, York County Master Gardener

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